



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
(860) 757-2270 Fax (860) 757-2215

Testimony of Stephen N. Ment
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
April 15, 2013

**House Bill 6703, An Act Concerning Youth Violence
And Gang Activity**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch on section 2 of **House Bill 6703, *An Act Concerning Youth Violence and Gang Activity***. This section would require the Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division (CSSD) to establish a three city pilot program, **within available resources**, to reduce the number of children and youths who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, and to reduce recidivism among delinquent children and youths. While the intent of this bill is laudable, we cannot support the additional duties it places on the Judicial Branch, particularly since they must be accomplished within available resources.

As members of the Committee may be aware, juvenile probation officers currently work with children and youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system, by virtue of having been arrested or referred to court for delinquent or status-offending behavior. This bill would expand CSSD's purview to children who are not involved in the juvenile justice system. While CSSD is engaged in a limited number of primary prevention projects, we do not support expanding that area of involvement. One reason is that we believe such an expansion could very well have the unintended consequence of increasing the number of children entering the juvenile justice system. We believe that prevention efforts should be left primarily to other state and local entities whose main focus is not the criminal and/or juvenile justice systems.

In conclusion, we respectfully request the Committee not to act favorably on section 2 of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.